The difference between visualization and reasoning and explaining the categories of known things

Mohammed Saeed Raslan

The difference between visualization and reasoning and explaining the categories of known things

الفرق بين التصور والتعقل وتوضيح أقسام المعلوم

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Translator’s introduction

All praise is due to Allah; we praise Him and seek His forgiveness.

We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our souls and the wickedness of our deeds.

He, whom Allah guides, none can misguide him, and he whom He misguides, none can guide him.

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone, without partner.

His is the dominion and His is the praise.

He gives life and causes death, and He is over all things competent. Now then:

I have translated those lectures given by Sheikh (**Muhammad Saeed Raslan**) , which you can listen to in Arabic, in audio and video, through this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGAqmcTLPJw&list=PLYeopyETdCcfB_WoDSIZyXC2M-us6ub1Z

And which were transcribed by our brother(**Abu al-Fadl Mahmoud bin Sayyid Jabir**) . I ask Allah to benefit us and you with the beneficial knowledge in them, for He is capable of all things.

This translation is my own effort. If I do well, it is from Allah and His guidance to me, and if I make a mistake, it is from myself and from Satan.

I ask Allah to make this work of mine purely for Him and to spread the word of truth throughout the entire earth and to teach Muslims who do not speak Arabic their religion that Allah has chosen for them.

The one in need of his Lord’s forgiveness: **Omar bin Ahmed Tohamy**.

The difference between visualization[1] and reasoning and explaining the categories of known things

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help, and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own souls and from the evil of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness there is no deity worthy of worship in truth except Allah, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family.

All praise is due to Allah. Now then:

Indeed, the truest of speech is the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him and his family. The worst of matters are those that are newly invented, and every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance leads to Hellfire.

Now then:

In the context of refuting the atheists, by the power and might of the Lord of the Worlds, some preliminary points were mentioned before the detailed refutation. The truth is that these preliminary points are both premises and conclusions at the same time; however, there is no harm in that. This is one of these introductions:

In "The Story of Faith," there is an explanation of the difference between visualization and reasoning:

Creation from nothing is not logically impossible, even if the atheist finds it impossible, rejects it, and is unable to conceive of it; but our minds, in the realm of large numbers, are incapable of conceiving clear truths, and these clear truths require only a little contemplation and a simple calculation of the type of addition, for example, and the incapacity of minds at that time is very strange; to the point that they dispute the result; Even if the most truthful and knowledgeable person were to tell her that result, the mind would still be incapable of conceiving it, even if it arrived at it itself.

[1] **It is the process of forming an image of something in the mind; it is the perception of meaning or essence.**

Don't you know the riddle of the torn paper?

If you were given an extremely thin sheet of paper, one hundredth of a millimeter thick, and asked to cut it in half, then cut each half again to make four, then cut each of those four to make eight, and so on until you had repeated the cutting and doubling forty-eight times,

if you were asked, before you began cutting and before you calculated: how thick do you expect this sheet of paper to be after being cut forty-eight times?

No matter how much you exaggerated your estimate; You didn't say: Its thickness exceeds one meter, or two meters, or three.

If you were told: Its thickness will exceed ten kilometers, you wouldn't believe it.

But if you were told: If you repeated the cutting up to the forty-eighth time, and then piled the cut papers into a solid heap rising to the sky, it would touch, or almost touch, the moon, which is three hundred and eighty-four thousand kilometers from Earth; If you were told that, you would be offended and think that the speaker was mocking you. After you verify that yourself with a simple calculation, if you wanted to imagine it, you would find your mind weak and incapable of imagining it.

Take your pen and calculate:

A sheet of paper, extremely thin, one hundredth of a millimeter thick, you cut it in half, then cut the two halves again to make four, then cut the four to make eight, and so on until you have repeated the cutting and doubling forty-eight times.

If you were to pile that up into a solid heap rising to the sky; It touches, or almost touches, the moon, depending on the distance between you and the moon, which is 384,000 kilometers. Try this calculation yourself, and may Allah grant you success.

Thus, reason affirms and confirms this, and there is no dispute about it; but visualization does not confirm it and disputes it.

Therefore, there is a difference between reasoning and visualization. A person may reason about something and yet be unable to visualize it at the same time.

The thickness of this torn piece of paper is approximately 384,000 kilometers, so much so that it almost touches the moon, as mentioned; but can you visualize this result after you have created it yourself?

This mathematical result, which reason affirms and no one can deny, cannot be affirmed by visualization; for even after its rational affirmation, you still feel mental fatigue in trying to

comprehend it. Do you now realize that our minds sometimes fail to grasp many truths, even those proven by rational argument?

This is because our minds were created incapable of fully conceiving many things; however, they can judge their existence through conclusive rational proof. Visualization is not the same as reasoning.

This sun you see

The mind, through precise and indisputable calculations, proves that it is a million times the size of the earth. Yet, you see it in the sky in this way, and your mind fails to grasp that, multiplied by a factor, it is a million times larger than this earth.

Therefore, visualization is not the same as reasoning. You may be able to understand something but not be able to visualize it, because understanding relies on primary axioms, which the mind arranges and structures, deducing some from others and building upon them, arriving at a definitive intellectual judgment that the mind itself may not be able to conceive, yet it is precisely this judgment that he arrives at.

Modern science today acknowledges this aforementioned truth regarding the difference between the possibility of visualizing something and the possibility of understanding it.

Modern science disregards the mind's inability to visualize and relies solely on reasoning because scientific facts, in their scope, quantity, and number, have become beyond comprehension. They are calculated, understood, and judged through reasoning, not through visualization.

Take, for example, light waves:

Do you think that the scientists who calculated that the waves that produce the color violet travel at a speed of sixty thousand waves per inch were the ones who arrived at that calculation and established that undeniable truth? But could these scientists who established this fact even visualize such speed if they blinded themselves and strained their imaginations?

No; because this enormous number in such a tiny space is beyond the mind's comprehension, though it is not beyond its grasp—that is, its validity can be judged by reason.

In modern atomic research, the numbers reach such astonishing proportions that the mind's inability to comprehend them becomes even more apparent.

For example:

Scientists calculate that the speed of sound vibrations can reach half a million vibrations per second, and this is definitively proven to them by scientific and rational proof, leaving no room for doubt. But can they visualize this enormous number of vibrations occurring in a single second?

Try it yourself; can you imagine, no matter how hard you try, a thousand vibrations per second? Let alone a hundred thousand? Let alone half a million vibrations per second?

Yet this thing that you and the scientists cannot imagine is an undeniable reality. So how did they come to know it?

They came to know it through reasoned calculation.

Now we understand that visualization is not the same as reasoning, and that the important thing is the mind's ability to reason, not its inability to visualize. This is the meaning of the scientists' statement: that creation from nothing is conceivable. Even if a person finds it improbable, or is weary of, or incapable of conceiving it.

This is the purpose of the riddle of the torn paper and the examples that followed it; to lead a person to this intellectual conviction, that there is a difference between visualization and reasoning. Ultimately, we arrive at the understanding that creation from nothingness is reasonable, but while the human mind can rationally prove it, it is weary or incapable of conceiving it. The mind's inability to conceive is irrelevant; what matters is what?

The crucial factor is proving it rationally.

The important thing is reasoning, not visualization.

Therefore, those who say: We can rationally prove—and reason does not deny it—that this universe came into being from nothing.

They say: This is rationally possible, but we cannot visualize it.

We say: Your visualization is irrelevant to us.

We do not consider it, nor do we pay attention to it. The truth, as previously mentioned, is that the mind affirms many things it comprehends, yet simultaneously struggles and is incapable of fully visualizing them.

This is one of the preliminaries, and this introduction follows, by the grace of the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and it falls under the categories of known matters:

The topics that scholars refer to as theology, prophethood, and matters of revelation encompass numerous rulings concerning existence, possibility, and impossibility.

For example, we say that Allah's existence is necessary, and that the existence of a partner to Him is impossible. We also say that it is permissible for Him, Glory be to Him, to do or refrain from doing anything possible. Furthermore, we rule that it is impossible for prophets to commit major sins, while illness and death are possible for them.

Therefore, when addressing this issue, which we are about to discuss, by the grace and power of Allah, it is essential to understand these rulings: necessity, possibility, and impossibility. This will help us to know what is necessary in itself, what is possible, and what is impossible.

Known things are divided into impossible, necessary, and possible.

These are the categories of known things.

There are three categories of known things: the impossible, the necessary, and the possible.

All things that we know, or that our knowledge can relate to, are divided, with regard to their existence, into three categories:

First: That which is impossible in itself.

Second: That which is necessary in itself.

Third: That which is possible in itself.

As for the definition and example of that which is impossible in itself:

That which is impossible in itself is that whose non-existence is inherent to its very nature.

Which means, by its very nature, necessitates non-existence, such that it cannot possibly exist, when we consider it without regard to anything external to it.

An example of this is the coexistence of two contradictory things, such as existence and non-existence, or motion and rest, in one thing, such that something can be both existent and non-existent at the same time, or both moving and still at the same time. This is impossible. The coexistence of opposites is inherently impossible. A thing cannot be both existent and nonexistent, or moving and at rest, simultaneously.

Similarly, an example of inherent impossible is the existence of a partner to Allah—exalted and sublime be He.

This is impossible.

All these things are judged by reason to be impossible, either self-evidently or through proof, when considered in and of themselves.

This is the definition of inherent impossible, and this is an example.

As for inherent necessary and its example:

Inherent necessary is that whose existence is inherent to its very nature.

Inherent impossible is that whose nonexistence is inherent to its very nature.

Inherent necessary is that whose existence is inherent to its very nature.

That is, that whose very essence necessitates existence, such that it cannot admit of nonexistence at all. This is evident when we consider it without regard to any external factor. An example of this is the existence of Allah Almighty and from this comes the fact that a body occupies a certain amount of space.

A body occupies a certain amount of space; this is necessary in itself.

The body must occupy a certain amount of space.

Similarly, the evenness of the number four (4), for example, is established: we judge that any body must occupy a certain amount of space, however small, in which its existence is realized; otherwise, it would not be a body. Likewise, we judge that the number four is necessarily even, not odd, simply by virtue of its conception; otherwise, it would not be the same number, but rather three, five, or some other odd number. However, its evenness must be established.

Examples of the Necessary Being include the father's precedence over his son in existence, and the whole being greater than the part. These are matters whose existence and necessity are self-evident to reason, or established through proof simply by considering them in themselves.

As for the possible being, and its example:

The possible being is that which, in itself, has neither existence nor non-existence.

That is, that which, in its essence, does not necessitate existence or non-existence.

This is if we consider it without regard to anything external to it. If it exists, it is because something else gave it existence, since its existence is not inherent to it. Existence and non-existence are the same for it. Since existence and non-existence are the same for it, if it exists, then there must be a creator for it. And if it exists and then ceases to exist, then there must be someone who caused its annihilation.

If it ceases to exist, then it is because the cause of its existence ceased to exist. And if it exists, then it is because something else gave it existence.

An example of this is all the beings we see before us, from animals and plants to inanimate objects, and likewise all their states, such as the falling of rain and the blowing of winds, and other such things that occur in this world.

All of them are possibles and require a creator for them. Because existence and non-existence are equal in its case; it comes into being after non-existence, and then non-existence follows it after existence. Therefore, its existence is not necessary like the existence of the Necessary Being; otherwise, it would not cease to exist, since the Necessary Being cannot cease to exist. And its non-existence is not necessary like the non-existence of the impossible; otherwise, it would not exist, since the impossible cannot exist. Rather, both existence and non-existence are possible in its case from the perspective of… [unclear word][2], and this is the meaning of its possibility.

This introduction is very important, and you will find it, God willing, in the explanation of the scholar Ibn Uthaymeen on "al-Saffariniyya," at the end of his explanation of "al-Saffariniyya." He presented these categories—which are the categories of what is known—and distinguished between the Necessary Being in itself and the Necessary Being due to something else, and the Impossible Being in itself and the Impossible Being due to something else, as was mentioned in the explanation of the scholar Ibn Uthaymeen on "al-Saffariniyya."

The possible being in itself may become necessary due to something else, and that is if that something else necessitates its existence by necessity. Similarly, if Allah wills the existence of a human being, then that human being's existence is necessary in itself?

It is not necessary in itself, but rather necessary due to something else, which is the connection of Allah's will to it.

For as long as He wills its existence, it must exist. However, in reality, it is possible, because existence and non-existence are equal in its case. It was non-existent, and then Allah willed its existence. When Allah willed the existence of that human being, its existence became necessary, not for its own sake, because it was non-existent. That which is necessary in itself cannot be non-existent. Rather, its existence is necessary due to something else, which is the connection of Allah's will to it.

Therefore, it was mentioned in the definition of the Necessary Being that its existence is necessary in itself, so that it is not considered necessary due to something else, because that

[2] **The transcript couldn't hear what the sheikh said clearly**

which is necessary due to something else—as mentioned in the example—is among the possible beings.

Likewise, the possible may become impossible, but not in itself, rather it becomes impossible due to something else if that something else necessitates its non-existence by necessity.

For example, if Allah wills the non-existence of a certain person at a certain time, then his existence will be impossible, not in itself, because he himself is non-existent, but due to something else, which is the connection of Allah Almighty's will to his non-existence. So it will be impossible due to something else, not impossible in itself, because this is something Allah Almighty's will to his non-existence. So if Allah Almighty wills to create him, he will exist.

Therefore, it accepts both existence and non-existence, so it cannot be impossible; because the impossible does not accept existence at all, just as the Necessary Being does not accept non-existence at all.

That is why it was mentioned in the definition of the impossible that its non-existence is in itself, so that it does not include what is impossible for something other than itself; because what is impossible for something other than itself is among the possible.

If we have considered the impossible to be among the known things, because we began by mentioning the categories of the known, saying: the Necessary Being, the Possible Being, and the Impossible Being; indeed, as mentioned, the categories of the known began with the mention of the impossible being in itself.

If we have considered the impossible to be among the known things, this is not in a literal sense, but rather metaphorically. Every mental image must correspond to something existing externally, and since the impossible never exists, it cannot have a mental image, nor can it be considered among the known things in reality. Rather, what is meant by considering it among the known things, and as one of the categories of the known, is that the mind has posited an example of it. This assumption leads to the conclusion that it is impossible. For you cannot visualize something being both existent and nonexistent at the same time, or being both moving and at rest simultaneously. This has no existence, nor can you posit a mental image of it being both existent and nonexistent at the same time, or both moving and at rest simultaneously. So why do we say it falls under the category of the known?

Because the mind posits an example of it in order to arrive at the conclusion that it is impossible.

The mind cannot visualize of a machine that is both moving and at rest simultaneously, because this does not exist in reality. Rather, it posits the simultaneous occurrence of movement and rest in a specific machine in order to conclude that it is impossible.

The ruling on the impossible is that it does not accept of existence at all. The impossible can never accept of existence; rather, it is necessarily nonexistent. The simultaneous occurrence of movement and rest in one thing or at the same time never happens.

Similarly, the precedence of a son over his father in existence is never realized. The proof of this is that non-existence is an essential attribute of its very being and essence, inseparable from it. For we have defined it—as previously mentioned—as that whose non-existence is inherent to its nature, meaning that whose very essence necessitates non-existence.

Therefore, the impossible can never exist.

And if non-existence is an essential attribute of the impossible, then if the impossible were to exist, it would necessarily follow that non-existence would be absent from it. That is, the impossible would not be non-existent, and this leads to its being not impossible, self-evidently. This is because non-existence is an essential attribute of its very being. Therefore, if it exists, it is not impossible, since non-existence is an essential attribute of the impossible. Thus, if it exists, it is not impossible, self-evidently.

Similarly, you say that thinking is an essential attribute of the essence of humanity. If this essential attribute were absent, such that a person were not capable of thinking, then that person would not be human. If the essential attribute of the impossible—which is non-existence—were absent, then it would exist, not be non-existent. For it to be impossible, and for the impossible to be impossible according to that premise—which is the meaning of negating the essence from itself—is invalid. Therefore, what it leads to, namely the premise of its existence, is invalid, and it is established that it does not accept existence, whether in the mind or in reality.

From this comes the existence of a partner to Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He; for this is impossible in itself, and therefore it will never exist.

The ruling on the impossible is that it can never exist; rather, it is necessarily nonexistent.

As for the possible, it has different rulings.

The impossible has one ruling: it can never exist; rather, it is necessarily nonexistent.

As for the possible, it has different rulings.

The possible in itself—as mentioned in its definition—is that which does not inherently necessitate existence or nonexistence; rather, its existence and nonexistence are derived from something other than itself. This includes all that you see of these celestial and terrestrial creations. All of this is possible; existence and nonexistence are equal in its case. Its existence and nonexistence are not from itself, but from something other than itself.

That which does not inherently necessitate existence or nonexistence is the possible.

Based on this definition of the possible, the following rulings apply to it:

Its need for a cause for its existence and nonexistence.

The possible thing; An animal, plant, or inanimate object necessarily requires a cause for its existence if it exists, and a cause for its non-existence if it was originally nonexistent, or if non-existence befell it after existence.

The proof of this is that neither the existence nor non-existence of a possible thing is intrinsic to it, but rather due to something else. Its essence does not necessarily entail one without the other; rather, its essence is sometimes existent and sometimes nonexistent, as previously explained in its definition.

Thus, existence and non-existence are equal in terms of their permissibility for it—that is, for the possible thing.

This is very important because if the existence of a possible thing is not intrinsic to it, and all these things are possible in the sense that they are contingent, coming into existence after not existing, and then returning to non-existence after existence, then the question arises: Who gave them existence?

Since their existence is not intrinsic to them, there must be someone who gave them existence. This introduction is crucial in proving the existence of the Almighty Creator, may He be glorified, when debating with atheists and other skeptics. Otherwise, we wouldn't need such an introduction, because Allah has instilled in human nature an innate recognition of the existence of its Creator, Originator, and Sustainer. However, we bring it up because we are refuting atheists, materialists, and skeptics who doubt the existence of the Almighty Creator.

We say to them: These are the categories of what is known: impossible in itself, necessary in itself, and possible in itself.

The mind cannot posit a fourth.

Then we say to them: Look at all of creation and at yourselves. You came into existence after not existing, and then you will return to nothingness after existence. So, who gave you existence?

And the same applies to this creation. If something were found that could exist and not exist without a reason that would make its existence preferable to its non-existence, then one of the two equals would necessarily be preferable, which is existence over non-existence, and this would be a preference without a reason.

This means: If something possible comes into existence, having previously been nonexistent, then if it is said that it came into existence without a cause, we would then say: You have given preference to one of two equal possibilities without a reason, and this is rejected by reason.

If something possible comes into existence without a reason, its existence would be preferred over its nonexistence, because existence and nonexistence are equal in relation to the possible. If it came into existence without a cause that brought it into being, then we would have given preference to one of two equal possibilities—existence—over nonexistence—which is equal to it in relation to the possible—and we would have given preference to it without a reason, and this is false, because it implies that they are not equal, and that existence is preferable to nonexistence because it came into existence without a cause!

However, in the definition, we saw that the possible is equal in its essence to existence and nonexistence.

Similarly, you say: If something possible comes into existence without a cause, its nonexistence would be preferred over its existence. It would necessitate the preference of one of two equals—namely, non-existence—for we have preferred it over its equal, existence, in relation to the possible—without any basis for preference. This is invalid because it implies that they—existence and non-existence—are not equal, since we have preferred one over the other while they are equal!

One of two equals cannot be preferred over the other except by a basis for preference. Here, we have preferred without a basis for preference, saying: "It is non-existence without a cause!"

"It exists without a cause!"

Thus, we have preferred one of two equals over the other, which means that they are not equal. However, it has already been established that existence and non-existence are equal in relation to the possible. This would be preferring one of two equals over the other without a basis for preference, which is logically invalid.

It would imply that non-existence is preferable to existence in relation to the possible, whose non-existence is without a cause. Yet, in the definition of the possible, we saw that existence and non-existence are equal in relation to its essence. Therefore, if something possible exists without a cause, or non-existence exists without a cause; For one of two equal things—existence and non-existence—to be preponderant without a determining factor, they would then be unequal, as previously explained. This would combine two contradictory things—equality and inequality—in one thing, and the combination of contradictions is invalid. Therefore, there must be a cause for the existence and non-existence of the possible.

This premise alone suffices to refute the atheists, arguing that what you see in the universe of Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, in this universe whose Creator you do not acknowledge, is not inherent to the universe. For it comes into being after non-existence, and then returns to non-existence after existence.

You see it.

In everything you see: the clouds that form and then vanish with the falling rain, becoming water, and so on with crops, animals, and plants. Indeed, they themselves came into being after not existing, and then inevitably come to perish. The inevitability of their becoming cannot be averted. For there is no human being who does not acknowledge the inevitability of their eventual death.

No one disputes this.

Everyone knows with certainty that they will die.

So it is said to them: From where?!

You came into being after non-existence, and you will return to non-existence after existence; so who gave you existence?!

It cannot then be said: This was without cause!

It is then said: You have contradicted yourselves, for your existence after non-existence, and your return to non-existence after existence, render existence and non-existence equal in relation to your beings. If you then favor one of two equals without a basis for preference, it means that they are not equal at all!

Therefore, you have fallen into intellectual contradiction as long as you employ your intellects and deny the existence of the Almighty Creator with these very intellects that Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, bestowed upon you, using them as mere tools instead of employing them for their intended purpose!

We will elaborate on the invalidity of favoring one of two equals without a basis for preference, explaining that this is only because it entails the coexistence of two contradictory things, as previously mentioned. We will elaborate on this point because we need it for the following arguments, so what has already been stated here suffices, and we will not need to repeat it later.

Thus, the first principle of the possible is: the possible's need for a cause for its existence and non-existence.

The second ruling: Its occurrence, “the occurrence of the possible”:

Everything that exists among the possible things is an occurrence.

The meaning of the possible being an occurrence is that it came into existence after having been nonexistent. The occurrence of something is its existence after its nonexistence. You will find this statement frequently used by scholars among our Salaf [righteous predecessors], such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, and other early scholars.

You will find the word “occurrence,” that these creations are an occurrence, that the occurrence has taken place, and so on.

The meaning of the possible being an occurrence is that it came into existence after having been nonexistent. The occurrence of something is its existence after nonexistence.

You, the book and the pen in your hand, the paper you are writing on, and everything you see—all these things are occurrences because they came into existence after not existing.

The proof of the occurrence of possible things is based on a premise that must be explained first.

This introduction is as follows: In the previous discussion, we established the need for a cause for the existence and non-existence of possible beings.

If a possible being exists, it either exists before its cause exists.

A possible being must have a cause for its existence and non-existence.

If a possible being exists before its cause exists, this is one possibility.

Or it exists simultaneously with its cause, so the cause and the possible being exist together, or the possible being exists after the cause exists.

These are the logical possibilities.

A possible being needs a cause for its existence—as previously mentioned.

This cause either comes after the existence of the possible being, which is the effect; thus, the cause follows the effect.

Or, the cause and the effect exist together simultaneously.

Or, the effect—which is the possible being—comes after the existence of the cause, so the cause exists first, and then the effect comes into being.

These are the three assumptions.

The first assumption: that the possible thing exists before its cause.

This is false because the possible thing needs a cause for its existence. This assumption leads to the prior existence of the dependent thing—the possible—over that which it needs—the cause. This negates the possible thing's need for a cause for its existence, since it came into being before its cause.

Therefore, it does not need a cause! It came into being without one!

It has already been established that the possible thing needs a cause for its existence because this need is a necessary fact.

Therefore, the prior existence of the possible thing over its cause is a false assumption.

The second assumption: that the possible thing exists simultaneously with its cause.

This is also false. Why?

Because the existence of the possible along with the existence of its cause necessitates their equality in the rank of existence; they came into being simultaneously. That is, neither has an advantage over the other in its existence, since they came into being at the same time. Thus, to judge that one is the cause of the other's existence, and an effective factor in it, would be to favor one of two equals over the other without any basis for preference, which is invalid, as previously stated, because it implies that they are not equal, and that is a contradiction.

If the precedence of the possible over its cause and their concomitance in existence are invalidated, then the third assumption is valid: the existence of the possible after the existence of its cause. Therefore, the Creator must precede the existent.

The Creator must precede the created.

This is what we aim to arrive at.

Based on this premise—which is the necessity of the existence of the possible after the existence of its cause— The proof of the occurrence of the possible is established as follows:

That the cause precedes the possible in existence necessitates the existence of the cause alone first; because the possible is nonexistent, so its cause comes into existence first from something else; because it cannot be combined with it in existence, so the cause comes into existence first, and the possible is nonexistent, having no existence, then the possible comes into existence after that; the cause brings it into existence in its existence, and when the cause alone comes into existence, and before the possible comes into existence, it is nonexistent, that is: the existence of the possible is preceded by nonexistence when the cause alone comes into existence; so it is then an occurrence, that is: it came into existence after nonexistence; because the meaning of an occurrence - as mentioned - is that which comes into existence after nonexistence; so every possible is an occurrence; so the son, for example, is nonexistent when his father alone comes into existence before he begets him, then when he begets him; the existence of that son is an occurrence; Because it came into existence after not existing, and this is the meaning of the constant occurrence inherent in every possible thing.

Among the principles of the possible is that the possible, in its non-existence, does not require a cause of existence.

Every possible thing has two states: the state of its existence and the state of its non-existence, because existence and non-existence are equal in its case.

Therefore, every possible thing has two states: the state of its existence and the state of its non-existence.

The existing possible thing must have a cause of existence that brought it into being; that is, it must have an existing cause that brought it into being. Everything you perceive with your senses from existing beings must have a cause that exists in order for it to possess existence, because a non-existent cause cannot be a source of existence. As it is said, one who lacks something cannot give it. Therefore, the One who gave these existing things their existence must be characterized by existence.

Does He give existence while He Himself is nonexistent?!

For He who gives existence to existing things must Himself be described by the attribute of existence.

The possible nonexistent does not require that its nonexistence have an existential cause, because nonexistence is negation and denial, and denial does not require creation. Rather, it suffices for the nonexistence of a possible thing that the cause of its existence, its preservation, or its influence be absent.

For example, it suffices for the darkness of your room—that is, the absence of light in it—that there is no one in it to illuminate it. It suffices for the darkness of the room that there is no one

in it to turn on the lamp, or that there is someone who does not light it, so their influence in illuminating it is negated, and the electric current that sustains its light is absent.

It is possible that there is no one in the room, so it remains dark, or it is possible that there is someone whose influence is negligible, so they do not affect the removal of the darkness, so they remain in darkness, wanting to sleep, and thus they exist. Yet, this darkness is not dispelled, and there is no light in the room.

The absence of light in the room is sufficient if no one is present, or if no one is contributing to its illumination, or if there is no electric current to maintain its light.

Non-existence requires only the non-existence of something similar. Thus, what was previously stated is confirmed: that the possible does not require an existential cause for its non-existence; rather, a privative cause suffices.

Or, in other words, it suffices for it to be non-existent if its cause does not exist, or if that cause does not affect it. Thus, it is non-existent even with the presence of the cause that could bring it into existence, but which does not affect its existence.

It is non-existent even with the presence of the cause that could bring it into existence, but which does not affect this non-existence with existence, like the darkness in the room, where light is absent.

You may be present in the room; But you cannot affect it by lighting the lamp, even though you are able to, and there may be no one there.

Therefore, one of the characteristics of the possible is that its non-existence does not require a cause of existence.

Another characteristic of the possible is its need for a cause of existence.

Just as the possible needs a cause for its initial existence, it also needs a cause for its continued existence.

The proof of this is that the possible, by its very nature, does not necessitate existence or non-existence. Consequently, existence—by its very nature—is not preferable to non-existence. Rather, the existence of the possible, if it exists, requires an external cause that makes its existence preferable to its non-existence. Thus, the possible's need for a cause of existence is an essential requirement of the reality of possibility, inseparable from it under any circumstances as long as it exists, whether at the beginning of its existence or in its continued existence. Because it derives its existence from something other than itself, the cause of its existence must be continuous. Therefore, it needs a Creator at the very beginning of its existence.

This entire universe was nonexistent. Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, brought it into existence. He is the Creator, Glory be to Him, and He created all these creatures from nothingness.

This is a matter of reason, established by the intellect.

The intellect establishes that existence can come into being from nothingness—as previously mentioned—but the intellect cannot conceive of it. And as previously mentioned, we do not consider visualization to be necessary when we possess intellect. We often understand something, but we cannot visualize it.

It was nonexistent, and Allah brought it into existence. Therefore, the reason for its existence, the One who bestowed existence upon it, is Allah. This existence—that is, this being—is dependent upon something that sustains it as long as it exists, because its existence is not self-generated. This refutes the philosophers, some of whose statements have already been mentioned, who claim that Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, created this creation and then abandoned it, preoccupied with ideals. They thus posit a Creator who created creation and then neglected it.

It is said: No, because the existence of this being, which was nonexistent, derives its existence from the One who brought it into being, the One who initiated its creation. Furthermore, it is dependent upon Him for the continuation of its existence. The need of a possible being for a cause for its existence is an essential requirement of the reality of possibility, inseparable from it in any state of its existence, whether at the beginning of its existence or in its continued existence.

We describe any being before us as a possible being that exists because it is before us; therefore, it exists. It is possible because it came into existence after not existing. It is both possible and occurrent, and then it exists. We describe it as a possible being that exists while it is before us, and we judge its need for a cause at the beginning of its existence because its existence is not intrinsic, as mentioned in the definition of possible being. Its existence is not from itself, but rather from something other than itself. Then we describe it in the second, third, and fourth moments, until the last moment of its continued existence, as existing in the same way.

From this, we must establish its need for a cause for its existence moment by moment—that is, for its continued existence. As previously mentioned, its existence is not intrinsic, but rather dependent on something else, being a possible being for whom existence and non-existence are equal. Its existence is not from itself, but from something else. That something else bestowed existence upon it initially, and this being—that is, this existent thing—is in need of the cause that brought it into being for the continuation of its existence. This is what is

intended to be proven: the need of a possible being for its continued existence, just as it needed a cause at the beginning of its existence.

Therefore, Allah Almighty is the Living, the Everlasting, the Exalted, the One who gave existence its existence. He is the Creator, the Originator who fashioned and created all of creation. He is the Originator, the Originator of the heavens and the earth. He created this entire universe and all these creatures, both celestial and terrestrial, not according to any prior model. Rather, Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, originated and created them from nothingness. Thus, they need His existence, the Exalted, at the beginning of their existence. Because its existence is from Him, He is the One who brought it into being, and it is dependent upon His continued existence, for its existence is from Him, the Exalted.

What is the true nature of a cause?

And what is the difference between a cause, a condition, and a preparatory factor?

The true meaning of a cause, which we have established the need of the possible for in our previous rulings, is the origin of creation and the giver of existence.

It may be expressed as the originator, the cause of creation, the efficient cause, or the true agent, and so on, with phrases that differ in form but not in meaning.

The term "cause" may sometimes be used metaphorically to refer to a condition or a preparatory factor, and the existence of the possible depends upon these two: the condition or the preparatory factor, even though there is a difference between these three in reality.

So we now have three terms: cause, condition, and preparatory factor.

Before we explain the comparison between the true cause on the one hand, and the condition and the preparatory factor on the other, we will provide an example of each of these—the condition and the preparatory factor—and state its ruling, so that the difference between them becomes clear.

An example of a condition is the builder in the construction of a house.

The builder does not give existence to the house he builds, as he does not create its building materials. However, according to what Allah has placed in the universe of laws, he is a condition for the construction of the house, a necessary condition for the construction of the house. This is through what he draws in his mind of the image of that house, and what he exerts in its construction of special movements related to the construction. He is a condition for the existence of this house, but he did not give it its existence. Nevertheless, the existence of the

house depends on this condition. The house needs the builder for its existence, but it is independent of him for its survival. The builder may die, and the house will remain after him.

A condition is necessary for the existence of that which is conditioned; however, it is not essential for its existence. For example, a building is a condition for the existence of a building, but the builder may build the house and then die, while the house remains for centuries after him. He does not need the existence of his condition for its existence; rather, he created it and then died.

As for the preparatory factor, an example is the first step.

It prepares and paves the way for the second step, such that there cannot be a second step from B to C unless it is preceded by a first step from A to B. In this respect, it is called a preparatory factor because it prepares for the step that follows. So, let's consider, for example, three points: A, B, and C.

The step from B to C must follow the step from A to B. Therefore, the first step, from A to B, prepares for the subsequent step from B to C. In this respect, it is called a preparatory factor.

If a possible thing depends solely on the existence of the condition, then it depends on the existence of the preparatory factor, and then on its non-existence. The preparatory factor comes into existence and then ceases to exist—that is, it is destroyed.

The second step depends first on the existence of the first step, and then on the completion and non-existence of that first step so that the traveler can begin the second step. Otherwise, the second step would not exist, as it only comes into being after the first step has ceased to exist.

If one remains in the first step, one cannot proceed to the second.

The first step—which prepares for the second step—must have been completed, completed, and non-existent.

This is the difference between a condition and a preparatory factor. As for the difference between a condition and a preparatory factor on the one hand, and a true cause on the other:

A true cause is that which precedes the possible in existence, then bestows it upon it, and that possible benefits from its cause for its existence.

This meaning is not realized in a condition, because the builder, for example, is not the one who created the building materials. Nor is it realized in a preparatory factor, because the first step is not what created the second step; rather, something else created them both together. Furthermore, if the first step were the cause of the second step's existence, it would remain with it, whereas we see that it does not exist except after the completion of the first step.

If a thing's existence depends on a condition or a preparatory factor, then it benefits from its cause; it derives its existence from the cause.

There is a difference between a thing's dependence on something else and its benefiting from existence from it:

In the case of a cause, a thing benefits from existence from something else; it derives its existence from something else.

As for a condition and a preparatory factor; For a thing's existence depends upon it, but it does not derive its existence from it.

This is one distinction.

The second distinction is that a possible being cannot exist independently of its cause under any circumstances. This meaning is not realized in the case of a condition; for example, a house can exist independently of its builder, since the building dies, but the structure remains.

Nor is this true of a preparatory factor; indeed, the second step does not exist independently of the first step alone; rather, it only comes into being if that first step ceases to exist.

As for the reason why the term "cause" is applied to a condition and a preparatory factor in a certain way, despite these distinctions, it is because they resemble a cause in that a thing depends upon them and in that they precede it in existence. You will find an overlap between these applications among many scholars who have addressed the materialists, philosophers, logicians, and other such misguided groups and their unbridled passions. We have already discussed in this introduction the definition of the three categories of knowledge: the impossible, the necessary, and the possible, and we have explained the ruling concerning each of these categories.

And Allah is the One from whom help is sought.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family and all his companions.